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ESSAYS

Europeanisation of the Slovenian party system – from marginal European impacts to the domestication of EU policy issues?

Danica Fink-Hafner and Alenka Krašovec

Abstract: *While more general research findings on the impact of European integration on party system competition in post-socialist EU countries remain inconclusive, some studies have shown direct interdependence between the deepening of democratisation and its Europeanisation. Whereas in successfully democratising new EU members EU pressure to satisfy the political criteria did not create deep tensions between intergovernmental and domestic levels, this was not the case in Slovakia. Based on Slovakian experiences and taking the unfinished process of EU enlargement into account, the authors suggest: a) a theoretical model encompassing a two-level game; and b) a greater variety of research units (allowing a bigger variety of national political characteristics as well as EU-impacts) to be included in further research efforts. The model was tested on Slovenia. While in Slovenia (like most recent post-socialist EU member states) the EU's relatively weak impact on political parties and party competition could be observed in the accession period, full EU membership has created greater space for EU-policy related cleavages on the basis of the domestic pattern of party system competition (left-right, government-opposition parties).*

Key words: *political parties, party system, Europeanization, post-socialist countries, Slovenia*

Introduction

So far, two main approaches have developed in the study of political parties' Europeanisation. The first one (Mair, 2000) focuses on Europe's impact on national party systems while the other (Ladrech, 2002) includes a broader range of five areas of political parties' Europeanisation – policy/programmatic contents, organisation, patterns of party competition, party-government relations and relations beyond the national party system. Research into old member states to date has not shown a significant impact on party system competition (Mair, 2000), while research findings in EU accession countries remain inconclusive (Pridham, 2002; Lewis, 2005). Still, some studies reveal interdependence between the deepening of democratisation and Europeanisation in Slovakia (Harris, 2004) as well as between Europeanisation and party system changes at the Slovakian national level (Henderson, 2005).

We believe that a systematic »error« in the research has prevented the development of any more exhaustive model for understanding the idiosyncratic processes of Europeanisation and its impact on party systems in post-socialist candidate and accession countries. Namely, it has so far been overlooked that all the recent EU candidate countries have been under the careful monitoring and assessment of the EU (European Commission) regarding many criteria, including political ones. It is exactly those countries that were the most successful in their transition to a democracy and in their post-socialist transformation (with the partial exception of the more troubled Slovakian transition) that were also granted full EU membership. Therefore, it should be noted that the question of meeting the EU's political criteria was not crucial for domestic party system developments in the post-socialist states which have become full EU members – except in Slovakia. In Slovakia, the unsatisfactory fulfilment of the human rights criteria led to direct EU political pressure in order to influence the outcome at national election.

With the only exception of Slovakia, where meeting the political criteria was a key issue for continuation of the accession process and final EU membership, there were no comparable EU political pressures aimed at national party competition in the other post-socialist accession countries. Yet they could be observed in some other candidate countries facing problems in building democracy such as Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Taking this broader picture into account, we present two arguments in favour of further development of the research model of the EU's impact on national party systems by encompassing two aspects – one conceptual and the other methodological.

First, we argue that a theoretical approach to a two-level game could give better insights into the dynamics and mechanisms of the EU's impacts on national party systems. So far, the Slovakian case has been presented as a special case. In fact, it shows that it cannot be understood without analysing the push-pull relationship between the EU and Slovakia in the accession process. Here, a two-level game was taking place. At the intergovernmental level, (relations between the EU and Slovakian government) Slovakia's government led by Mečiar kept integration with the EU and meeting of the EU accession criteria as a national priority, while in the national-level game it sought electoral support through extreme right policies.

Second, a methodological re-thinking of the samples of units to be included in empirical research on EU impacts on national party systems is called for. We argue in favour of a much broader scope of research units involving a greater variety of units than has been the case so far. Namely, it is only by incorporating a greater variety of units that we can build a more profound causal research model. It is possible to achieve such a variety of units if we also include countries seeking integration with the EU (current candidate countries as well as new post-socialist EU members) in the sample or even the whole population of all currently eligible units.

This article's purpose is twofold: a) to sketch out a preliminary theoretical model in line with the presented arguments; and b) to test it for the case of Slovenia. The article

is primarily based on the following research projects: a) in Slovenia (in the framework of the Centre for Political Science Research at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana): 'Relationships between European Party Federations and Slovenian Political Parties' (headed by Alenka Krašovec) as well as the research programme on political science research (headed by Danica Fink-Hafner); b) a bilateral research project between Slovenian and Czech researchers called 'Relationships between National Political Parties and European Party Federations – the Case of Slovenian and Czech Parliamentary Parties' (headed by Alenka Krašovec and Ladislav Cabada); and c) two international research projects – one in the framework of the British Academy called 'the Impact of EU Enlargement on Central European Party Systems and Electoral Alignments' (headed by Paul G. Lewis) as well as an international project called 'Euro-scepticism and EU Referendums within the European Parties and Election Research Network' (headed by Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart).

The following sections in the article include: a) theoretical considerations on the EU's impact on party system developments, while taking into account the idiosyncrasies of post-socialist countries' Europeanisation paths; b) an overview of research findings on the EU's impacts on the Slovenian party system's development; and c) a confrontation of the newly developed theoretical model and Slovenian experiences with Europeanisation's impacts on national political parties and their interactions.

Theoretical considerations regarding the EU's impact on party system developments

Two »Western« theoretical frameworks

Research into the EU's impacts on national parties is a relatively underdeveloped area in the old member states. This is even more so for the new (newly integrating) states. To date, two theoretical frameworks for this kind of research have been developed. In Mair's theoretical framework (2000: 29-31), we can potentially expect some European impacts on the format of national party systems (the number of parties in the electoral arena, the existence of parties with the explicit and primary intention of mobilising support for or against the EU) and on their mechanics (modes of interaction between the (relevant) parties). Taking a different path, Ladrech (2002: 396) exposes five research dimensions of Europeanisation's possible impact on national political parties: a) changes in party programmes; b) internal organisational changes; c) changes in national party competition; d) changes in relations between the government and parties; and e) changes in relations beyond the national party system. In spite of their differences, we can see a certain overlap between these two concepts in the ways political parties interact in the national party system (Figure 1). Still, neither of the two authors has developed a deeper insight into two-level, EU-related games of candidate/accession countries' political parties in power.

Figure 1: Areas and variables of the Europeanisation of political parties according to Mair (2000) and Ladrech (2002) – a synthesised view

AREAS OF POLITICAL PARTY EUROPEANISATION	VARIABLES
political parties	
policy/programmatic content (L)	modifications in party programmes including the EU as a reference (factor of pursuit), expressing European expertise, mentioning the EU and/or European institutions
organisation (L)	organisational modifications, statutory changes
national party system	
format (L)	L: fragmentation of the party system, formation of new parties
format (M)	M: formation of new parties
patterns of party competition (L) / mechanics of interactions between parties (M)	L: politicalisation of the EU in national politics, change in tactics and strategies by parties designed to capitalise on the »EU issue«, the presence of a strongly pro- or anti-EU party; the nature of a party's »dominant coalition« (Panebianco, 1988) M: competition on the pro- vs. anti-European integration dimension
party-government relations (L)	changes in party-government relations on EU matters, new forms of interaction between party and government on EU matters (e.g. the role of the party's EP delegation in government policy-making)
Transnational	
relations beyond the national party system (L)	transnational party co-operation; contacts, co-operation and integration with EU-level party organisations; engagement of party personnel in partisan networks in extra-national forums; recruitment of active individuals from national parties for EU appointive and elective offices

L... (Ladrech's definition)

M... (Mair's definition)

Empirical research into the European impact on the pattern of party competition has so far been quite rare, even in the old member countries. While such research tends to show no significant direct impacts of the EU on the national party system, one of the few more detailed case studies in old member countries by Andeweg (1992) revealed something else. Namely, according to his research in the relatively fragmented party arena and coalition governments of the Netherlands, the national pattern of party

interactions indicates a long-term tendency of a spill-over of domestic party cleavages into the field of the domestic management of EU affairs.

The idiosyncratic political context of accession states (in comparison to the old EU member states) challenges the existing theoretical models. In the article we argue that a more exhaustive model of the EU's impact on national party systems in post-socialist countries should be developed. Some of the key (so far missing) components to be included in the model are: a) the gap between the EU political criteria and the national political context; and b) characteristics of transitions to democracy involving various levels of a (mis)fit regarding the EU political criteria and therefore also various levels of political disagreement on domestic reform changes related to EU requirements.

Post-socialist countries' idiosyncrasies along the Europeanisation path and their meaning for theoretical frameworks

The type of integration with the EU does matter. While in the accession stage the general goal of achieving full EU membership has 'national interest' status, Europe confronts domestic politics in the circumstances of full EU membership in the form of many specific EU policies. Usually, in these circumstances issues of intergovernmental decision-making hold the status of big or significant political questions (e.g. decisions on new common European policies, the European budget, EU foreign policy).

Like old(er) member states, the newcomers have also passed through several stages of Europeanisation (Lippert, Umbach and Wessels, 2001). While old(er) EU members were involved in creating the EU in terms of its polity and policies, the latest newcomers had to incorporate EU policies and adapt institutionally *before* having any say in their formation. Under the pressure of the EU's constant monitoring and evaluation, 'foreign affairs' (relative to the EU) were in a way made 'domestic' before formal EU membership. An evaluation of accession states and their achievements relative to various political and economic criteria set by the EU was taking place. Henderson (2005: 5) stresses that »no country with extremists in government was recommended for the commencement of accession negotiations by the Commission, and while accession negotiations were in progress, they were shunned as coalition partners by the other parties«.

In the accession process no specific 'EU model' has been suggested for the development of accession states' party systems – in spite of monitoring the fulfilment of the political criteria for EU membership. For the candidate and accession countries there have been no direct recommendations regarding their domestic political system developments such as for the electoral system, pattern of party competition or government formation. This has been left up to the domestic processes of consolidating these young democracies with some partial exceptions of EU pre-election political pressures, e.g. in the cases of Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of course, the publishing of critical Commission reports also created very persuasive indirect pressure. Henderson (2005) describes the dynamism in case of Slovakia through the relationship between attitudes to post-communist reforms and to the EU.

Initially, in Slovakia views on the EU corresponded to levels of support seen for the post-communist reform project. As being accepted by the EU and the international community became identified with governmental competence, anti-reform parties were either politically marginalised or changed their political outlook and hence also their coalitional potential. Of course, this shift was only possible when a satisfactory proportion of voters accepted the conscientious connection between national reform policies and EU accession requirements and in that way made the alternation in power come true.¹

Figure 2: The EU's impacts on national party system competition

The EU's impact on national party system competition	no / minor	big
fulfilment of the EU's political criteria		
minor gaps	a candidate /accession country with little/no EU impact on national party competition (national political consensus)	
significant gaps	a country has not expressed any interest in integrating with the EU	significant EU impact on national party competition (a two-level game)

The case of Slovenia provides the opposite case of »missing« a two-level game due to parties' political unanimity on EU integration as well as the majoritarian EU integration support on behalf of voters in the accession stage.

The EU's impact on the national party system – the case of Slovenia

Our contention is that in Slovenia two periods in its European integration process should be distinguished: the first stage is before full EU-membership and the other

¹ The Slovakian national stage had been divided into the left-centre part and nationalist/reformist right, bringing two opposing views on EU membership. Consistently, in the 1994-1998 period the Mečiar government favoured EU integration in relation to the EU while refusing to moderate the domestic political programme that would make Slovakia a credible candidate for the EU and NATO. On the national level this was in a way rational since (according to public opinion polls) the supporters of parties in the nationalist 1994-1998 government were either indecisive, different or even clearly opposed to EU accession (Henderson, 2005:7). The Commission's negative assessment of Slovakia in 1997 marked a turning point in re-thinking the Slovakian political direction among the majority of voters as well as in Slovakian national politics. The international community offered a clear hint that having Mečiar's party in government would prevent an invitation for Slovakia to join the EU and NATO. Still, it was not until supporters of the reformist parties enabled the formation of two Dzurinda governments (1998-2002 and 2002-) and the synchronisation of Slovakia's internationally declared policy of integration with the EU and its national post-communist reform policies.

stage is after full EU membership. In the first phase, no significant problems in the consolidation of democracy, no significant EU-related cleavages in the national party arena and no direct EU-political pressures in relation to national party competition in Slovenia took place. This is why we also could not observe significant signs of a two-level game regarding the fulfilment of the EU's political criteria. In fact, we could talk about an »asymmetrical« Europeanisation effect: there is some impact of Europeanisation on party manifestos as well as changes in party organisational structures, while some more direct changes in party organisational structures may also be observed (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006-in print). But there have been no significant direct impacts on the format and mechanics of party competition at the national level seen in the formation of a (successful) Eurosceptic party. Full EU membership represented fulfilment of the national interest and was supported by a special agreement between Slovenian parliamentary parties. Nonetheless, this agreement could also be treated as the EU's direct impact on the mechanics of party competition since it reduced potential disagreements over EU issues.

The new stage of membership has opened up a new space for European impacts on the national party system's format and the mechanics of competition while also allowing the continuation of other aspects of political parties' Europeanisation. So since Slovenia's full EU membership the relationship between parties when discussing EU issues has changed – EU issues have been drawn into nationally specific domestic ideological cleavages and party struggles.

Idiosyncrasies of the Slovenian party system's development

As Figures 1 and 2 in the Appendix show, Slovenian parties and the party system have been maturing in »a natural way« while also developing party links with kindred political organisations at the European level. Gradualism, a lack of any clear-cut ideological shifts or electoral engineering, as well as a combination of ideological polarisation with broad governmental coalition-building with the same party in the centre was taking place for most of the 1990-2004 period, which ended with the 2004 centre-right electoral victory (Fink- Hafner, 2006; Fink-Hafner and Krašovec, 2006-in print; Ramet and Fink-Hafner, eds., 2006-in print). The Slovenian party arena is often perceived as bipolar for it involves competition between the cluster of old (centre-left) parties and the cluster of new (predominately centre-right) parties. Especially in pre-election periods, the Slovenian party arena behaves in a bipolar way even though it is quite fragmented – the average effective number of parties in the 1990 to 2004 period is 6.5 (Fink-Hafner, 2006).

In the process of the transition to a democracy, political parties in Slovenia achieved a high level of consensus on the four basic values: respect for human rights, parliamentary democracy, the welfare state and joining European integration processes (Fink-Hafner, 1992, 1995, 1999, 2001). The organisational format of the Slovenian party system has not been significantly affected by European integration processes.

The establishment of the New Party, the only truly Eurosceptical party, in 1996 was an early consequence of the growing salience of EU issues and falling public support for EU membership. Establishment of the New Party can be identified as a minor EU impact on the format of the Slovenian party system since the party received less than one percent of votes at the 2000 election.

Party manifestos

In the 1990-1992 period parliamentary parties several times mentioned the EU and Europeanisation as a reference point for certain major reforms exposed at the time in Slovenia. More frequently, EU membership was mentioned as a future and distant goal of Slovenian foreign policy (Podmenik, 1993).

An analysis of party manifestos in the 1993-2004 period shows that the majority of Slovenian parliamentary parties, especially those which are members of their European counterparts, devoted slightly more attention to EU issues in that time, especially by mentioning with increasing frequency the EU in the context of European policy as well as in referring to other policy areas formally considered a purely domestic concern (Krašovec and Lajh, 2004: 178-179). Yet, it seems Slovenian parties have not faced a strong challenge to more elaborately or more decisively develop their stances on particular EU policies (at least on more exposed policies like for agriculture or the environment).

One interesting indirect impact of a European party federation is seen in the Slovenian Democratic Party which dropped the 'Social' from its former title of Social Democratic Party of Slovenia in September 2003. This name change was partly the result of co-operation with the European People's Party, which indicated at least informally that it expected such a name change. However, it is important to emphasise that the EPP neither formally demanded the change nor made it a condition of full membership (Lajh and Krašovec, 2004: 173). Still, it is a fact that the name change and quite radical change in ideological stances of the Slovenian Democratic Party towards liberal economic values (indeed an innovation in the Slovenian party system) overlap in the time perspective with the party's membership of the European People's Party. Hence the change in the party manifesto may be seen as an indirect consequence of its Europeanisation.

Salience of EU-related ideological cleavages (conflicts) in the party system

General overview

Slovenia began to pursue integration with the EC/EU in the early 1990s but it only signed the European Agreement in 1997 after several heated discussions in the National Assembly. Namely, one current member state (Italy) objected to the prohibition on the purchase of real estate by non-Slovenian citizens that was then included in Slovenia's Constitution. Slovenia was pressed to change its Constitution to allow non-citizens buy land in Slovenia. The events connected with acceptance of the European Agreement and the prominence of these events in both the Slovenian political arena and the public

at large more generally produced at least a partial change in the attitudes of certain parties and the public to accession.

As a consequence of the abovementioned events and changes in the public feeling toward Slovenian accession, in 1997 Slovenian parliamentary parties right across the ideological spectrum, except for the Slovenian National Party, decided to sign an Agreement on Co-operation in the Accession Process with the EU and to support accession as soon as possible. Since the Agreement on Co-operation in the Accession Process with the EU remained in force till the end of 2000 it is not surprising that the election 2000 were also characterised by the almost complete absence of Eurosceptic parties. Nevertheless, this was an excellent opportunity especially for non-parliamentary parties to increase the share of their votes by using Eurosceptic rhetoric.

In addition, one important EU policy, namely monetary policy, has been obviously deeply rooted in politicians' minds. During the last two years there have been clear aspirations of the old government (led by the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia) as well as the new government (led by the Slovenian Democratic Party) to adopt the euro in 2007. Indeed, all parliamentary parties have supported the necessary economic measures to be taken to make this possible. Further, some representatives of political parties even argue that parliamentary parties should sign a similar agreement on co-operation to that which was drawn up in 1997. Yet it seems a new written agreement will not be signed but it is obvious that the parties do not actually need one for this particular issue. It is different when looking at the national government's proposals for implementation of the Lisbon strategy in Slovenia since here major disagreements between parties have emerged.

Marginal Euroscepticism

The New Party was established in 1996 and was evidently trying to take advantage by using hard Eurosceptical rhetoric. Its representatives emphasised their disagreement with the basic principles of the EU. On the other hand, the Slovenian National Party – the only parliamentary party not to sign the mentioned agreement – also showed its opposition to accession through its promotional billboards where the party leader held up a plucked chicken surrounded by EU stars. In the context of decreasing public support for accession and the mentioned agreement among other parliamentary parties both parties obviously saw a possibility of increasing their share of the vote at the 2000 election and entering parliament by adopting a Eurosceptic position. However, they were not very successful in achieving these goals as they only received a combined 5.0 percent of the vote on a joint platform (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006-in print).

The EP and parliamentary election in 2004 were marked by the absence of any real Eurosceptic parties. Namely, the New Party did not even contest the EP election nor the parliamentary election held a few months later. At the same time, the Slovenian National Party has also significantly reduced the strength of its Eurosceptic rhetoric and begun to be (self-)identified as Eurorealists. Quite surprisingly, some other parties

(including the Slovenian Democratic Party and the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia) stressed in their rhetoric the importance of different aspects of the Slovenian national identity while simultaneously stressing the importance of active co-operation in the framework of EU projects (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006-in print).

The first European Election (2004): the »nationalisation« of debated issues

At the EP election held in June 2004 the EU was unexpectedly not among the most ventilated topics since the ratio of EU to national issues seen in the parties' programmes was 25:65, and 10 percent of them could not be classified in either group (Kustec Lipicer, 2005: 49). This may be indirectly connected with a party's interest in or preparations for the national parliamentary election subsequently held in October 2004.²

On the other hand, an analysis of television debates (TV confrontations) also showed that the presentation of programmatic standpoints greatly depended on the media's own preferences. Parties hence did not have much opportunity to develop their own ideas when journalists were in the position of selecting the key topics on which they were expected to comment, a process that only indirectly gave them the chance to develop their programmatic positions. The issues selected by journalists can be divided into those national in character and those concerned with the EU, although it seems that the national ones were more visible than the latter (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006-in print). Indeed, we may conclude that the campaign failed to generate much interest in the EU.

The 2004 parliamentary election: the continuous prevalence of domestic-oriented campaign debates

Developments in the parliamentary election were similar to developments at the EP election. Party debates were organised in public and on the biggest commercial TV station. But the EU was not explicitly raised as an important topic. Despite this, the EU was mentioned by almost all party representatives in an instrumental way – party representatives namely claimed they would regard EU membership as an important fact to be considered and used as a negotiating factor in some open questions between Slovenia and Croatia.

An analysis of the electoral manifestos for the 2004 parliamentary election paints a slightly different picture. EU topics were important if not very clearly specified. It was common to the majority of the parliamentary parties that they presented Slovenian membership as both a challenge and opportunity for faster economic, social, security and cultural development. They also used the EU to legitimate their views and policy solutions, mainly in economic, agricultural, educational and social fields (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006).

² When contesting the EP election the candidates of some non-parliamentary parties quite openly connected their current position with an interest in the national election to be held a few months later.

Internal organisational impacts

Potentially, the EU's impact on the party system can be a direct or indirect consequence of changes in party organisation. Although we could say that some Slovenian parties (especially those that are members of European parties) have experienced changes in their internal organisational structure, it should be stressed that in most cases they have been relatively minor. A common denominator of changes in practically all parties is the enhanced role of international co-operation secretaries. In all parties they have become permanently invited to all relevant party bodies. However, so far this has more been reflected in party practice than in any explicit statutory change (Lajh and Krašovec, 2004: 173). Other innovations in the internal organisation of the Slovenian Democratic Party, the (United List of) Social Democrats,³ the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, the Youth Party and the Democratic Party of Retired Persons include a formal definition of relations between the party and its MEPs through their *ex-officio* inclusion in various party bodies (Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer, 2006-in print).

A significant change to the internal organisation of the (United List of) Social Democrats occurred when its party leader was elected as an MEP, which led directly to the establishment of a new party position. This took the form of a permanent deputy position being established for the party presidency, its occupant being nominated by the party's president. In mid-October 2005 the newly elected president of the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia also became an MEP, thereby raising the question of whether the party will consequently introduce a similar organisational change to that made by the (United List of) Social Democrats.

Currently, some of the presented internal organisational changes can at least indirectly be connected with the mechanics of the party system. Namely, both of the most important opposition parties, the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia and the United List of Social Democrats (recently renamed the Social Democrats) are led by MEPs who are frequently abroad and therefore not in constant touch with events in the Slovenian parliament.⁴

Conclusion

EU issues do not seem to have the same level of prominence in all the countries that have become EU members or are still candidate states. Especially where expectations that EU political criteria (defined only for the last wave of enlargement!) allowing closer integration with the EU in fact mean deep (often simultaneously unpopular) social and political reforms, the elite (party or parties in government) find themselves between a rock and a hard place. If they want to push unpopular reforms forward to satisfy EU conditions they risk their governing position in the national party system where anti-reform/Euroscptic parties could take advantage of voters' related dissatisfaction.

³ The party changed its name in 2005 to the Social Democrats.

⁴ Slovenia has introduced the incompatibility of positions of an MEP and other public offices.

So far, the EU has clearly played a role in these dynamics in several cases (among the recent EU members it is Slovakia that stands out here). The EU's impact could be seen in limiting the strength of extremism, forcing larger parties to moderate their behaviour and helping pro-reformist forces. This is why we think that the proposed theoretical approach involving a two-level game could be helpful in further research into the EU's impact on candidate/accession countries' parties and party systems.

Slovenia is the case of a relatively successful transition including its main reforms, the absence of EU-related conflicts in the national political arena as well as in national party system competition. On the whole, we can even say that the EU had a minor or limited impact on the Slovenian party system (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Areas and variables of the Europeanisation of political parties according to Mair (2000) and Ladrech (2002) – a synthesised view

AREAS OF POLITICAL PARTY EUROPEANISATION	Research findings in Slovenia
political parties	
policy/programmatic content	slight modifications in party programmes including the EU mainly as a positive reference
organisation	mostly marginal organisational modifications in most parliamentary parties
national party system	
format	marginal impact: only one clearly Eurosceptic party was formed and one parliamentary party being »Eurorealist« in its rhetoric
patterns of party competition / mechanics of interactions between parties	marginalisation of EU-related issues in national politics most of the time – with one clear exception which demanded the Constitutional amendment during the negotiating stage with the EU; predominance of a special agreement among parliamentary parties not to politicise European issues at home; a spill-over of domestic cleavages into the field of EU-related issues since Slovenia's full EU-membership with the sole exception of Slovenia joining the European Monetary Union (part of the previous agreement between the parties)
party-government relations	predominantly collaborative relations by the time of full EU membership: the recent birth of government-opposition cleavages in the case of EU matters
transnational	
relations beyond the national party system	contacts, co-operation and integration with EU-level party organisations by most parliamentary parties; engagement of party personnel in partisan networks in extra-national forums; recruitment of active individuals from national parties to EU appointive and elective offices

While in Slovenia in the accession stage and the first two years of full EU membership a relatively weak impact of the EU on the party system and party competition can be observed, it seems the EU has clear potential in national party competition. Full EU membership has brought about more space for EU-policy related cleavages on the basis of the domestic pattern of the party system structure (left-right, government-opposition parties). The most prominent cluster of policy issues relates to implementation of the Lisbon strategy for strengthening the EU's competitiveness in Slovenia (such as tax reform, cutting down the welfare state, government attempts to avoid social partnership decision-making on socio-economic reforms, privatisation of the public sector). In addition, some Slovenian MEPs have also already tried to use the EU arena (especially the European Parliament) to influence national party system competition on the left-right and government-opposition axes. Therefore, we have ultimately not only created a draft proposal for future academic debate on the EU's impact on national parties and party systems, but we are also putting forward some additional research questions: why, when and how do EU-related issues become domesticated and transformed into indigenous ideological cleavages in national party systems?

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Appendix 1

Figure 1: Slovenian parliamentary parties' ideological family links by the 2004 parliamentary election

Parties	Party family	Formal links with European Party Federations	No of MEPs in the EP in 2004	In Parliament after 2004
United List of Social Democrats (in spring 2005 renamed Social Democrats)	social democratic	Party of European Socialists (PES) since 1996	1 (PES)	Yes
Democratic Party of Pensioners	no clear party family affiliation – party of pensioners' interest group with a social democratic orientation	/	2 common MEPs with the Liberal Democracy (ALDE)	Yes
Party of Youth of Slovenia	no clear family affiliation until 2003; stress on interests of youth and some liberal issues; shift towards green issues in the 2004 campaign	European Federation of Green Parties / European Greens (EFGP/EG) since 2003	/	No
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia	liberal	European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR – renamed ALDE) since 1994	2 common MEPs with the Democratic Party of Pensioners (ALDE)	Yes
Slovenian Democratic Party (former Slovenian Social Democratic Party)	conservative (previously anti-communist social democratic)	European People's Party (EPP) since 2001	2 (EPP)	Yes
Slovenian People's Party	conservative/ agrarian	European People's Party (EPP) since 2001	/	Yes
New Slovenia - Christian People's Party	conservative / Christian democrat	European People's Party (EPP) since 2001	2 (EPP)	Yes
Slovenian National Party	elements of extreme right and left	/	/	Yes

Figure 2: Results of parliamentary election in Slovenia in 1990-2004

		1990 ^a	1992 ^b	1996 ^b	2000 ^c	2004
Liberal Democratic Party; since 1994 Liberal Democracy of Slovenia	No of votes	156.843	278.851	288.783	390.797	220.848
	% of votes	14.49	23.46	27.01	36.21	22.80
	No of seats	12	22	25	34	23
	% of seats	15	24.44	27.77	37.77	25.55
Social Democratic Party, since 2003 Slovenian Democratic Party	No of votes	79.951	39.675	172.470	170.541	281.710
	% of votes	7.39	3.34	16.13	15.80	29.08
	No of seats	6	4	16	14	29
	% of seats	7.5	4.44	17.77	15.56	32.22
United List of Social Democrats, since 2005 Social Democrats	No of votes	186.928	161.349	96.597	130.268	98.527
	% of votes	17.28	13.58	9.03	12.07	10.17
	No of seats	14	14	9	11	10
	% of seats	17.5	15.56	10	12.22	11.11
Slovenian Christian Democrats	No of votes	140.403	172.424	102.852	-	-
	% of votes	12.98	14.51	9.62	-	-
	No of seats	11	15	10	-	-
	% of seats	13.8	16.66	11.11	-	-
Slovenian People's Party*	No of votes	135.808	103.300	207.186	102.817	66.032
	% of votes	12.55	8.69	19.38	9.53	6.82
	No of seats	11	10	19	9	7
	% of seats	13.8	11.11	21.11	10	7.88
New Slovenia - Christian People's Party (NSi)	No of votes	-	-	-	94.661	88.073
	% of votes	-	-	-	8.76	9.09
	No of seats	-	-	-	8	9
	% of seats	-	-	-	8.89	10
Slovenian National Party	No of votes	-	119.091	34.422	47.251	60.750
	% of votes	-	10.02	3.22	4.38	6.27
	No of seats	-	12	4	4	6
	% of seats	-	13.33	4.44	4.44	6.65
The Greens of Slovenia	no of votes	95.640	44.019	18.853	9.712	6.703
	% of votes	8.84	3.70	1.76	0.90	0.69
	No of seats	8	5	-	-	-
	% of seats	10	5.56	-	-	-
Democratic Party of Pensioners	No of votes	-	-	46.152	55.696	39.150
	% of votes	-	-	4.32	5.16	4.04
	No of seats	-	-	5	4	4
	% of seats	-	-	5.56	4.44	4.44
Democratic Party	No of votes	102.931	59.487	28.624	8.102	2.670
	% of votes	9.51	5.01	2.68	0.75	0.28
	No of seats	8	6			
	% of seats	10	6.67			

Party of the Youth of Slovenia	No of votes	-	-	-	46.719	20.174
	% of votes	-	-	-	4.33	2.08
	No of seats	-	-	-	4	
	% of seats	-	-	-	4.44	
Slovenian Craftmen's Party	No of votes	38.269	-	-	-	-
	% of votes	3.54	-	-	-	-
	No of seats	3	-	-	-	-
	% of seats	3.8	-	-	-	-
Socialist Alliance of the Working People	No of votes	58.082	32.696	-	-	-
	% of votes	5.37	2.75	-	-	-
	no of seats	5	-	-	-	-
	% of seats	6.3	-	-	-	-

* On 15 April 2000 the Slovenian People's Party and the Slovenian Christian Democrats united in a new party, SPP+SCD – Slovenian People's Party'. Just before the 2000 parliamentary election a group, mostly from the former SCD, left the new party and competed at the election as a new party, New Slovenia.

- Parliamentary election in April 1990, Socio-political Chamber, proportional system, number of seats: 80 (78 for parties, plus two for the representatives of (Italian, Hungarian) national minorities.
- Parliamentary election in December 1992 and November 1996, National Assembly, proportional system (d'Hondt's system and Hare quota), number of seats: 90 (88 for parties, plus two for representatives of (Italian, Hungarian) national minorities.
- Parliamentary election in October 2000, partial change of the electoral system: introduction of a 4 per cent national threshold and the Droop formula instead Hare quota.

Sources: Uradni list Republike Slovenije: 17/90; 60/92; 65/96; 98/2000 compiled by Alenka Krašovec and Tomaž Boh, in Fink Hafner and Boh, (eds.) (2002); Republiška volilna komisija – <http://www.rvk.si>.

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